

ISSN 1729-9802

CENTRAL ASIA

ISSUE NO. 60

SUMMER 2007



Journal of Area Study Centre
(Russia, China & Central Asia)
University of Peshawar
Peshawar-PAKISTAN

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THE PROSPECT AND PERCEPTION OF PEACE IN PASHTUN CULTURE

*Dr. Raj Wali Shah Khattak**

The world has never been in the dire need of peace at any stage of history as it is today. One reason is quite clear. That is almost every country of the world has sufficient cache of deadly weapons due to the advanced nuclear and war technology. It is with a flash that the world could be wiped out and made extinct. It is, therefore, intensely needed that conflicts between countries and various cultures should be resolved through dialogue. In the new emerging perspective of the world, the psyche of the people and nations both on individual and collective levels herald destruction of the world. But fortunately, well in accordance with the concept of globalization, some individuals and organizations have intended to promote the cause of peace culture in the global village and reduce the possibility of war to the least extent and also pave way for adopting dialogue as a mean to resolve conflicts.

Peace always guarantees advancement, prosperity and betterment of the life of people. It can be manifested in all shapes of beauty, high sky towers, buildings, historical monuments and magnificent seats of learning. On the contrary, wherever we see devastating signs of destruction, they bespeak volumes of evils of war and barbarism. This bizarre situation has forced people belonging to all the cultures of the world, to bring peace to their respective societies by enacting their cultural values and golden traditions. The peace efforts move on from local frame to international level involving the whole of humanity in order to bring back peace and unity in diversity. We have lots of religious,

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social norms and ethics which advocate peace, mutual respect, unity and humanism, the culture of Pashtuns has teaching of peace if properly understood.

Pashtuns enjoy this ancient and very strong culture of Pashtunwali. The habits, rituals, customs, traditions and the rules and regulations which govern the typical Pashtun life pattern, is called Pashtunwali. This code of conduct of Pashtuns reflects the explication of the inner and outer life of Pashtuns and their values down the centuries. This very code of conduct also shapes the individual and collective psyche of Pashtuns. The term "Pashtunwali" is synonymous with Pashtun culture. It has different dimensions. Before dwelling upon this terminology let us have a look at the location of Pashtuns. The climate and geographical conditions have also played a significant role in shaping the Pashtun culture. Their land is lying upon 60° to 73° longitude and 26° to 36° latitude of the earth. The region is divided into different geographical configurations and areas. Pashtuns live on both sides of the Durand Line. Different tribes live in the North West of Pakistan and Eastern regions of Afghanistan. In addition, many scattered tribes live in the tribal pockets of the North Eastern Pakistan as well. In the far flung North West of Pakistan and in some of its South Western regions also we find some Pashtun tribes. Similarly in Indian States of Rampur and Rohailkand, one can see a sizeable Pashtun population.

Geographically, Pashtuns are surrounded by Karakoram range in the North East and Hindukush ranges in the North West. In their extreme, West and South are mostly desolate deserts. In the East we see lofty peaks of Himalaya. The historic Oxus River flows in the North. Hilmand and Harried Rivers flow in the South. This is the land where 60 million Pashtuns or Afghans live by their glorious traditions and customs. Their land is multicoloured. The severe heat of valleys and plains, the Alpine cold of the hills, mountains and the extreme weathers of the desolate deserts have all contributed towards shaping the Pashtun's psyche. All social norms, values, traditions and practices fall under one comprehensive system earlier referred to as Pashtunwali. This term is derived from the word "Pashtun". Pey (p) stands for *pat* 'fellowship or comradeship', Sheen (Sh) for *Shegarrah* 'doing good to others', Tey (T) for *Toora* 'literally means sword'

(bravery), *Wawo* (W) for 'wafa' (fidelity), and *Noon* (N) for *Nung* 'honour'. Its essence lies in chivalry, courage, loyalty and honour.

These values have given a special character to the Pashtun race. Pashtunwali is an unwritten code controlling, guiding and balancing to a large extent, the form, character and discipline of the Pashtun way of life. It is the name of the traditional customary law, which has been adopted by Pashtuns from times immemorial. It is framed on the principle of equity and has deeply ingrained in the social fabric of a Pashtun's life and is highly esteemed and held sacrosanct by all persons irrespective of their financial or social status. The more one adheres to its manifesto, the more high esteem he enjoys in his brotherhood and community. It embodies in itself all the customs, and traditions, heritage, customary law, usage and all social relations. It is a concept conveying the meanings of tribal socio-economic, political and cultural system in totality. Courage, hospitality, kinship, loyalty, love for friends, chastity, morality and respecting other people's rights, are different components of Pashtunwali. This code requires every Pashtun to defend his motherland, to grant asylum (offer protection) to destitute irrespective of their creed or caste. This includes even giving shelter to one's deadly enemy. Pashto to a Pashtun is not only his language, but also the embodiments of all human virtues. Some basic components terms are given here for knowledge and interest of the readers.

Jirga, *Maimastia* (Hospitality), *Nanawati* (Seeking forgiveness in feud), *Panah* (Asylum), *Ghairat* (Modesty), *Nung* (Honour), *Teega* (peace truce) and *Rogha* (Reconciliation) are leading towards strengthening peace in the society. All character traits are because of being brought up in the culture of Pashtunwali. It is the culture that shapes the character of people. This culture has different and distinct aspects and various institutions which form the true spirit of the people. It is beyond any doubt that Pashtuns are diehard lovers of their Pashtunwali and hold it in high esteem and consider it a precious asset of their national pride. Based on moral values, Pashtuns consider their code of conduct one of the best and ideal systems of the world. It is because of the fact that there is a greater possibility of satisfying human aspirations and expectations whether spiritual or material. But one has to understand the philosophy of pure Pashtunwali.

Pashtun is basically a tribal society. Their simple way of living has its own peculiar colour and taste.

Popular Indian author, Dr. Rafiq Zakaria, in his celebrated book 'A study of Nehru' has quoted remarks of Jawaharlal Nehru about the tribal way of life in India which fit to Pashtuns as well. "Indeed, it is quite absurd to call them backward. An average crowd of some of these tribes would probably be more advanced in many ways than an average crowd else where in India. The tribal people are virile; they are highly disciplined; they are often, a great deal more democratic than most others in India. Above all they are people who sing and dance and try to enjoy life, not people who sit in stock exchanges, shout at each other and think themselves civilized. People should develop along the lines of their own genius and we should avoid imposing anything on them, rather should try to encourage them in every way of their own traditional arts and culture. We should not judge result outcomes simply by statistics or the amount of money but the quality of human character evolved."

The history shows that whenever the Pashtuns had leaders of vision, farsightedness and capable of understanding the true Pashtunwali, the real and basic features of their culture have become visible. Whenever the aliens have accessed this culture following the set principles, Pashtuns have welcomed them and the unity has always resulted in peace and prosperity. Pashtuns have contributed towards establishing peace and stability in the world but the same history has not been written so far yet. Perhaps this cultural history of Pashtuns till now, lies scattered in their proverbs, traditions, songs and the folkloric genres. However, a chunk of it has been preserved by Pashto literature. Before examining the literary genres and oral traditions which will reveal the true picture of Pashtun culture, it is better to discuss the image of Pashtuns in the world in the wake of new geopolitical scenario shaped by other people. Pashtuns are being considered as martial and warrior race. The fact that Pashtuns have fought many battles and wars has never been denied. They have shown resistance against Alexander the Great, the Iranian Darius the Great from Zaheeruddin Babar, Aurangzeb Alamgir followed by Ranjit Singh, Britishers and then having trapped in the Great Game, Pashtuns seriously suffered the Russian invasion. Still Pashtuns having

fallen prey to world politics, they have faced a war like situation even after the disintegration of Russia.

Khushhal Khan Khattak once has rightly depicted this bizarre situation of Pashtuns in one of his couplets.

لایو شور را خینی لږ نه وي بل راشي
مگر زه پيدا په ورځ د شور و شريم

“I am constantly in the grip of pandemonium; probably I am born on the day of chaos.” The land of Pashtuns enjoys a significant strategic geographical importance in the world politics. It has both political and strategic dimensions. Unfortunately, before trying to have an in-depth study of the Pashtun's cultural values, the world powers in their ecstatic state of unprecedented strength directly plunged into war with Pashtuns. This is not the first incident in the history. Many such incidents have taken place in the history of Pashtun. In the recent past, first during the Great Game, the two world powers: the Britishers and Russians against the wishes of Pashtuns, made their pure land as a central field for playing their political game and secondly without understanding the traditions and Pashtun psyche, both the great powers began their intriguing game that resulted in a constant clash. The three Afghan wars between Pashtuns and the Britishers are ample proofs in history as to who is to be blamed for destroying peace in the land of Pashtuns?

The literature created during the wars reflects, a strong desire for peace and also the Pashtun folklore contains aspiration for establishing the lasting peace. After the Afghan wars, when Pashtun soldiers were fighting on different fronts during the Second World War, the Pashtun mothers, sisters and damsels have longed for peace in their songs and their strong desire for stability and peace has made a loud echo in the Pashto folk literature. Tapa is a unique folk literary genre which is sung with or without, any musical instrument and Pashtun women, mostly express in it their feelings and emotions in a befitting manner. Almost every Pashtun male and female is gifted with a natural poetic talent to compose tapa on any occasion and subject. It has encompassed every aspect of Pashtun life. Peace and love for peace have always been the favourite subjects of the tapa. A few examples of tapas reflecting

love for peace, are given here. "Your love has made me so caring that I don't dare trampling even an ant for fear of its being separated from its life partner." "I am so tired of wars that I won't fight even the battle of love." "If respect could be achieved through fighting wars, then all the villages would have been led by dogs."

After the Second World War, a long and crucial period of the cold war began. It divided the world into two hostile blocks. This division gave a new sense of peace to the people of the world. As a consequence of the cold war, Vietnam was entangled into a hot war. The atrocities being meted out to the oppressed people of Vietnam roused the conscience of the enlightened people of the world to sympathize with them. Voices for self determination of the people of Vietnam were raised in the world literature. With it, an organized world literary movement for establishing peace and stability in the world laid strong roots in every nook and corner of the globe. Pashtun poets and writers were not lagging behind like other people in this regard. They too were desirous to bring peace and stability to the chaotic world. A strong literary movement in Pashto literature started in favour of Vietnam, for establishing peace at all levels and the same is a reflection of Pushtun's love for peace. In this connection, two masterpiece poems of the popular revolutionary poet and critic Qalandar Momand can be quoted '*Da Alami Zameer Pah noom*' (In the name of the world Conscience) and *Da Veitnam Charbetay*', the precedings are the representative poems of the Pashto literature. The rough English translation of the first and last stanzas of the poem "*Da Alami Zameer Pa noom*" is given."

زۀ د تیرو او ظلمتونو ازلې دشمن یم
 لکه د نمر مې همېشه د شپې څیگر څیرلې
 ما پخپل ځان لمبې گاللي زما زړۀ سوځېدۀ
 خو مې د شپې حجاب د څړیکو په څنجر څیرلې

تر خپله د مظلوم په مرسته ټينګ ولاړ يم

الجزائر و پوښتنې و گورئ کشمير څه وائي؟

چې نن په ما ده نو په ما ده په ارام پراته يئ

يه د دنيا اولسه اتاسو ته ضمير څه وائي؟

"I am an absolute enemy of aggression and tyranny. / Like the sun rays, I have torn down curtain of night's darkness. / I have carried the burden of the hardships on my heart. / I have torn down the curtain of night's darkness through the sword of my pang. I am standing firmly by the destitute to the best of my capability. Ask about Alga ire and what the Kashmir demands from you? / To day it is my turn to have been in trouble. Tomorrow it will be yours. O! The people of the world, ask your conscience what does it tell you? Likewise, poems in Pashto literature have been created to throw light on every such big incidence of prime importance. Pashtun poets and writers have expressed deep anguish and concern over any kind of aggression and have resisted it strongly in their writings. The poems '*Lomumba*' and '*Da AlgazireJameela*' of Fazle Haq Shaida reflect the hatred for war and strong desire for reconciliation and peace. In the wake of the world struggle for peace too, Pashtun poets and writers gave a significant place to this important subject. The impact of the world literary movement filtered down and cast indelible marks on the modern Pashto literature too. For the poem '*Amn*' (Peace) of the twentieth century the writer was even recommended for entering in the gallery of United Nations Organizations (UNO) and a letter in this regard was also written to the then Secretary General of the UNO. The poem written on the subject of peace also carried the title of '*Amn*' (Peace). This earned the title of Shauir-i-Amn to the senior Pashto poet Pir Gauhar and still enjoys fame of this title. Translation of the first and last stanzas of the poem, is presented as a specimen.

زۀ غوارم په امن له ازغیو د اېشیا لمن
 نه غوارم چې سوخي په لمبو د اېشیا لمن
 ډکه دې وي تل په گلو سرود اېشیا لمن
 ستا یمه شاعر په پښتو د اېشیا لمن
 بس په حق انصاف دې په ریشتیا خبره سپینه شي
 غوارمه چې ټوله دنیا مینه مینه مینه شي

دا د باشعورو نړۍ غـوارم چې ابادۀ وي
 ورک دې شي بمونه او جنگونه ملک بربادوي
 امن امن امن بس په امن دې تل ښاده وي
 دا خانګود امن دې رېشتیا په امن یاده وي
 څار دې امریکه له روسه روس دې څار له چینۀ شي
 غوارمه چې ټوله دنیا مینه مینه مینه شي

"I wish Asia to be secured from thorns (in oriental poetry thorn is the symbol of evil) I am against the flames of war which burn the land of Asia. / I wish the flowers of peace be blossomed in Asia. / I am a poet of Pashto and admire peaceful Asia in my mother tongue. / Let all the disputes be settled through dialogue on merit. / I wish the whole world to be bound in the net of love.....I wish this world of the civilized people should remain prosperous. / To hell with bombs and wars that bring destruction. / Let the world should remain joyful through peace and peace alone. / Let this cradle of peace be always remembered as peace loving region. / Let America be friend Russia and Russia be tied into the knot of friendship with China.

The sense of having love for peace and hatred for war which had been aroused among Pashtuns as a result of an organized movement, is of much historical significance and could be termed

as a historic revolution. This movement was launched in the earlier decades of the twentieth century when all the Pashtuns gathered and took up arms to resist the British aggression against their territory and values system. During struggle for freedom of the subcontinent from the British clutches of power, the efforts of non-violence of great Pashtun leader Abdul Ghaffar Khan popularly known as Baacha Khan, are crystal clear to every one in the world. Likewise, his views on different political issues, after partition, regarding India, Kashmir and Afghanistan have proved true and hundred percent correct. This shows the inert and innate Pashtun philosophy towards peace and mutual understanding. This visionary, revolutionary, farsighted and peacemaker leader of a charismatic qualities, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan popularly known as Baacha Khan appeared on the scene and gave a slogan of peace to the centuries old war stricken warrior Pashtun folk. He was a Khan (landlord) by status but his heart was throbbing with pains of the poor masses. He initiated a movement, along with some of his other sincere companions, which was not new in nature but unprecedented in the history of Pashtuns on their land.

The movement came to be known as *Khudai Khidmatgaar Tehrik*. The manifesto of this movement was the philosophy of nonviolence, brotherhood and peacemaking. It was a successful movement which turned even the warrior Pashtuns into nonviolent. The *Khudai Khidmatgaar Tehrik* of Baacha Khan drove away the pride of *Khanism* and feudalism from the powerful Khans and landlords among Pashtuns. It defeated the pride of the powerful people and gave a new hope to the weak and the destitute. The movement united both Khan and poor at one single platform. For the first time, Baacha Khan brought unity in the ranks of Pashtuns. He then took along all including Khan, tenant, labour, wager, and craftsman to get freedom through equity and humanism. He taught them the meaning of human freedom in clear words. Baacha Khan freed Pashtun folk from the clutches of the Britishers through the philosophy of nonviolence. His determination was firm like a rock. The ordeals and tribulations of imprisonments could not weaken his strong will. He suffered every kind of trouble for the sake of his people. People from every walk of life were drawn to *Khudai Khidmatgaar Tehrik*.

The movement cast deep impact on Pashto language and

literature. So the nonviolence philosophy carved out a niche in the Pashto literature and occupied a prominent place for itself. That is why we see glimpses of thoughts and desire for peace, fraternity, reconciliation along with the freedom struggle. It is, therefore, deemed as the brilliant chapter in the history of Pashtuns. It was the era when the Great Game was being played on the land of Pashtuns. After the Great Game, Second World War, the cold war, soon the land was once again trapped into the Russian invasion. It might have left some psychological impacts on the minds of Pashtuns. It is very difficult to judge this fact that as to why Pashtuns are termed as the warrior nation.

They fight war for Nung (Honour) only. But unfortunately, nobody has taken pains to understand the value of Nung in Pashtun's culture; otherwise their inclination towards peace could have been revealed very easily. World people have condemned the Russian aggression against Pashtuns but remained oblivious to their incredible sufferings. The Russian invasion created such unrest on the land of Pashtuns that forced every peace loving Pashtun to take up arms which resulted in the disintegration of the former USSR. Warlords were emerged to serve the interests of the West, the negative consequences of which are still actively visible in the fabric of the whole society. In the back drop of 9/11, once again a disastrous chaos was imposed on the territory of Pashtuns in the name of peace. Once again Pashtuns came into lime light to be called as terrorists and religious fanatics across the globe.

This is in fact another blunder. Superpowers being unaware of the Pashtun culture, history and psyche think that they (Pashtuns) could be subjugated on the gunpoint. This goes against the tide of learning from history. Someone has justifiably said, "We learn from history that we don't learn from history." It may not be difficult to grab Pashtun's territory by force but to digest it by force is the most crucial task. The other historians too have termed Pashtuns as a warrior race in the annals of the history but it is not the whole truth.

Looking into the chapters of history will reveal to us that growing up of the glorious Gandhara civilization and reaching its zenith reflects the Pashtun's natural love for peace. Also collectively accepting the religion of Islam as a result of the decision of the Jirga provides us a proof of their love for peace and security as it stems

from the very spirit of the religion. It is a different view altogether that Islam is also being considered now a days as the religion of terror and threat to the world peace which is in fact a misunderstanding and borders on the clash of civilizations to some extent. It needs explanation as to why civilized Pashtunwali drenched in the teachings of Buddhism, Zoroastrianism and Islam should be presented in such a way to the world people. The world today wants to know about the true nature of Pashtun values system and its various aspects. If they are serious about it then they must keep in mind that in addition to its own indigenous natural characteristics which is also a medley of all those features of Buddhism, Zoroastrianism and Islam which can guarantee the world peace. The question is why peace should not be maintained on the land where Zoroaster spread its teachings successfully, where Gandhara civilization attained the pinnacle and where Islam is being practiced in its true letter and spirit. As we have mentioned earlier, Pashtunwali and its culture are the unwritten constitution, these are preserved mostly in oral traditions of Pashtuns. It would not be an exaggeration to say that Pashtun society has more peace inviting terminologies than any other peace loving society in the world. The practical examples that can be cited as *Rogha*, *Saaz*, *Teega*, *Panah*, *Jirga*, *Maraka*, *Baramta*, *Mailmastia* and many more.

Hujra is the hub of many social activities in Pashtun's way of life. It plays very important role in keeping peace among various sections of the village people. The term *Hujra Jummat* (Hujra and Mosque) symbolizes the sense of decorum and seriousness of the situations regarding social and religious responsibilities of a Pashtun. Different issues relating to peace and stability and other village disputes are brought under discussion in the Hujra and resolved through the census of the Jirga.

These are practically in use in everyday life of Pashtuns. The message that can be drawn from folk songs for peace has an interesting background. Also one can feel an intense and clearly visible propensity towards peace and stability in the classical literature of Pashtuns. This concept of peace is closely linked to the cultural values of Pashtuns. This value is held in high esteem by Pashtuns. If there is no threat to Pashtun's honour (*Namoos*) both on individual and collective levels and if it is secured, then the question doesn't arise that any Pashtun will take up arms. If

the thing is the other way round, then saving this honour is a positive aspect of Pashtun's culture. True Pashtunwali also favours this concept. Khushhal Khan Khattak versifies this in his couplet.

جہان شرم نام و نتگ دے
“کټ دا نه وي جہان ږنگ دے

"It is to live with honour in this world, without it, the world is anarchy." Lord Russell said, "If peace can not be maintained with honour, it is no longer peace." Pashtuns are always desirous of strengthening this honour for the sake of constant peace, they prefer to leave their hearths and homes but never compromise on the question of honour. Perhaps it is the reason that Pashtuns do not build cemented houses which are either left behind or demolished for safeguarding the cause of honour.

An intellectual has said, "Peace won by compromise is usually a short lived achievement." Having natural democratic thinking about safeguarding the honour, Pashtuns are equal irrespective of their social status. Honour has the same meaning for poor, affluent, small and big Pashtun folk. Therefore, it is obligatory upon everybody to take care of everybody's honour. Large numbers of Pashto proverbs contain this concept. A few examples are given here. "A city can be run better by a sweet tongue than by a sharp sword." "Hundred rupees are not worth a single good word." "To rule requires wisdom." Avoiding beating a man with your finger and he will not kick you." History is witnessed to this very fact that uncertain situations have always forced Pashtuns to take up arms. These uncertain situations are nothing but the fear to lose this honour due to the foreign intervention.

If even today the world superpowers ensure the protection of Pashtun's honour, not a single Pashtun will ever like to go on war with anyone at any cost. It is to make it very clear that this honour is not a so called misnomer rather it is very meaningful in its individualistic perspective. Being tired of the centuries old wars at the hands of the foreign powers at the behest of their expansionistic desires, Pashtuns of the modern day whose country and people have been destroyed, have a strong desire for peace.

The world should now understand the true spirit of Pashtunwali and Pashtuns and should access them through their

cultural tradition. No other nation perhaps knows better the importance of dialogue than Pashtuns. Khushhal Khan Khattak, the national poet of Pashtuns, has said long ago,

بند و بست د مملکت شي په خبرو
یسو تر سلو صدقه شه سل تر زرو

"State can be managed best through means of dialogue. / One could be sacrificed for hundred and so the hundred be sacrificed over the number of the opinions of thousand persons." One can derive deep meanings reflecting the democratic thought of the poet in this couplet. In another couplet, Khushhal Khan Baba says,

نوراني کا هغه ځای چې سره کښېني
د ډیرینه څلور یاران په مصلحت

"If sit together a few close friends for reaching a compromise, they will enlighten the very place." Emphasizing the need for dialogue Khushhal Baba says,

هغه کار چې په نرمۍ تر سره کېږي
څه حاجت چې رساوه ټپي تر جنگونه

"Any dispute that could be resolved through moderation, then there is no need to resolve it through war." Condemning the miscreants and trouble makers, the great Baba says,

رخنه گر هر گز د ملک د پرېښوونه دے
که هر څو ټپي شفاعت شېخ و ملا کا

"The trouble maker should not be tolerated in the country at any cost, even if he has the support of Mullah or a saint." Advocating and adopting the way of dialogue for arriving at a census on any issue is very old among Pashtun culture. All the Pashtun intellectuals, poets and writers have advocated the adoption of democratic norms in their writings in a befitting manner. The other prominent and deep impact on the Pashtun's

outlook comes from their spiritual leaders and literary giants. The Pir Roshan's teachings and the whole Roshanite literature advocate the promotion of the cause of peace and reconciliation. Different mystic disciplines have created poets like Rahman Baba whom we call as the poet of humanism. The tremendous popularity of Rahman Baba among Pashtun's society is an ample evidence of their love and deep attachment with peace.

Large portion of Rahman Baba's poetry consists of the verses which give the message of morality and the high human values. Had peace been against Pashtun nature, how would Rahman Baba gain such enormous popularity among Pashtuns? The fact is that those verses of Rahman Baba have received much world wide public applause which contain the message of peace. He says,

کړد گلو کره چې سیمه دې گلزار شي

ازغي مه کره په پنبو کښې به دې خار شي

"Grow the crop of flowers so as to make the whole area flowery/ don't grow thorns, they will prick your own feet." While teaching goodness, at another place, Rahman Baba says,

که بل بد کاندې ته ښه ورسره وکا

هر یو نخل چې مېوه لري سنگسار شي

"You do well to others despite their mistreatment to you. Look at a tree bearing ripe fruit, it will give you fruit even if you throw stones at it." Advocating humbleness and humility he says,

دهقان کر په لوړه زمکه باندې نه کا

سر کوزي کوه چې بڼې دې مرغزار شي

"The farmer does not grow crop on high fields, likewise you too should remain submissive and humble to get your garden flourished."

زهر ښه دي که په صلح په صلاح وي

نه شکري په فتنو او په غوغا

"Getting of poison through peaceful way is better than getting of sweets through means of fighting."

چې د وړو د عزيز زړه پرې ازارېږي

حاصل مه شه هسې رنگې مدعا

"It is better not to achieve any goal which hurts dear and near one's hearts." There is no end to such sublime verses.

The gray colour of Pashtun's dress symbolizes their down to earth nature. Pashtuns like the dye of ashes of *spalmi* (*Calotropis Gigantea*) and also this colour is a symbol of tradition of nonviolence. One can't help to put these questions as to why and what for the peace loving Pashtuns were forced to long for grabbing power and resorted to aggression. Why the Pashtuns who used to live a prosperous life in their clay made muddy houses, were compelled to build up forts and towers. They used to decorate flowers in their turbans once upon a time but now take pride in carrying guns on their shoulders. Who did all this mischief to them? This is simply tragic and nothing else. Pashtuns are misrepresented and misinterpreted by world media and have leashed out an anti-Pashtuns propaganda calling them terrorist and religious fanatics which they had never been and would never be. This is a serious blunder committed by the world community, the consequences were worst in the past and will also cast black shadows in future for the world peace. The best thing would be to discover and explore Pashtuns, their history, social traditions and customs and cultural heritage in true perspective. People should know and understand the structure and functioning of Pashtun's Jirga system. They should try to comprehend the philosophy of Jirga as a strong peace making social institution.

If the Bonn conference of Loya Jirga could bring peace, stability and democracy to a war ravaged country of Afghanistan, then Pashtuns can also play their due role in establishing world peace and can contribute a lot to the spreading of the global peace culture. But mutual understanding is a perquisite for accomplishing such a gigantic task. Before converging on one platform, the world cultures should develop and enhance a sense of tolerance and mutual understanding in a better way among their people. For establishing

everlasting peace on the surface of the earth. Pashtuns' moral system can be best exploited at world level in this regard.

Jirga and its institution have a very long history since the times of the Aryans: *Sabah*, *Shura*, *Ghunda* and *Naasta*, *Maraka* are the other names of the Pashtun council but Jirga/ Jurga are the actual names which are widely known. It is this Jirga which makes the Pashtun culture and Pashtuns peaceful and peace loving. The very concept of Jirga is based on peace Jirga is the council of elders whose representatives are selected from among the different *Khels* (sections) of the village, *Seema* (Area) and *Qabeela* (tribe). Jirga and its tradition are very old. It is the best peacemaking institution. Pashtuns resolve all their disputes and conflicts through the decisions of Jirga. Jirga functions at local as well as national level. Local Jirga works for resolving various issues and conflicts arising among village people while national Jirga (Loya Jirga) is a big council which is held to resolve the conflicts, issues and other affairs whether pertaining to bringing peace among the warring tribes and also to select the head of the government. This Jirga enjoys the powers to resolve political, social, economic, cultural and religious issues. It eliminates tension, quarrels and misunderstanding existing among people of the society. Jirga is preceded by *Maraka* (discussion) which develops a consensus among members of the Jirga before taking a firm and righteous decision regarding any issue at hand. To accept Jirga's verdict is considered as a sacred social responsibility. Nobody can violate laws of the Jirga, whether a huge penalty in terms of money, demolition of house and excommunication.

The local Jirga comprises of those well chosen representatives whose honesty, fairness, courage and straightforwardness are widely acknowledged by village people. It is essential for every member of the Jirga to have character integrity, truthfulness and outspokenness. He must have the quality of being intelligent, farsighted and must know the rules and regulations of the Jirga and Pashtunwali. Jirga actually functions and takes decisions according to the principles and laws of the Pashtunwali. It is a must for the Jirga to be held at a neutral place where all the members are supposed to sit on ground traditionally in circle. That is why every member can be seen carrying a *chadar* (sheet of cloth) so that he could lay it to sit on.

The Pashto proverb "You better leave the village but don't ignore the customs of the village" explains one of the basic principles of the Jirga means that one can leave the village but can not violate the principles laid down in the traditions and customs of Pashtunwali. At local level too, the Jirga paves way for bringing peace and reconciliation among people regarding any issue or conflict. Jirga enjoys the authority conferred on its members by the people hailing from every walk of life. Jirga has the capability to resolve conflicts between two opposing groups, tribes and even two nations. It can play its due role for creating a favourable atmosphere for peace and tranquility between government's forces and tribesmen as well. The decisions of the Jirga are so long-lasting that they are still honoured once made with the Britishers in the tribal agencies. The present unrest and uprising in the Waziristan is said to be because of the violation of those decisions by the government. Had the government taken the tribesmen into confidence through Jirga, the resistance of the army would not have been that severe. The history tells us that the strength of the Ghoris and Lodhis was the result of consultation of brethren Pashtuns through Jirga of the earlier Monarchs before Ibrahim Lodhi when he ignored this practice of his forefathers, the Pashtuns left him alone and this caused his defeat in the first battle of Panipat.

Ahmad Shah Abdali fondly remembered as Ahmad Shah Baba, the founder of modern Afghanistan had got access to the throne through the decision of Jirga. Though the history of all those historical Jirgas has not been written so far, but there are many historical Jirgas which have changed the course of history. Many interesting evidences could be found while arriving at the historical decisions. All the peace agreements that had been reached between the Britishers and Pashtuns were taken by Jirga.

It is need of the hour that we should know the depth of the prediction of Allama Muhammad Iqbal which he had made in one of his Persian couplets. "Asia is a body made up of water and clay. The Afghans (Pashtuns) possess the place of heart in this body. Disturbances in this heart will cause disturbance to the whole of Asia and its nourishment is the flourishing of Asia."

اسيا يک پيکر اب و گل است

ملت افغان در آن پيکر دل است

از فساد او فساد اسيا

از کشاد او کشاد اسيا

This one prophecy of a visionary poet is sufficient for the world people to open their eyes. Don't go any far. We have recently experienced this phenomenon in Afghanistan. The unprecedented war destruction in Afghanistan took the whole world to uncertainty and political turmoil. Now the war on terrorism is being fought on Pashtun's land without going into the depth of understanding the psyche of Pashtuns. It could be made effective only if a way of dialogue according to the cultural traditions and social norms of Pashtuns is adopted and also an understanding of their moral system is a must which regulates and governs their inner and outer life style. This moral system is embedded in their language and literature.

Many Pashtun poets have composed poems reflecting and highlighting the miserable plight and horrible situations of Pashtuns focusing on how they are suffering under the ropes of great powers of the vested interests. Now when there is a paradigm shift causing a remarkable change in Pashtun's cultures leading them to perpetual peace, Pashtuns are also contributing towards the efforts of making peace at world level. In addition, they have speeded up the pace of peace making efforts at local level.

They are very much conscious of the so called clash of civilizations which results in the absence of dialogue and mutual understanding. The democratic nations of the world should keep in view that other civilizations should also have the right to flourish and that they should avoid hurting feelings of the people who come from various cultural identities across the globe. This is in fact an evolutionary process while revolution invites war and conflict. Exercising power will not work to resolve issues and 'Change' in the world could be brought through evolutionary process which may take years and even centuries as the maxim goes 'Rome was not built in one day'. Everybody should work to eliminate

Machiavellian way of ruling from the world. We strongly believe that peace efforts could only be made effective if peace elements in the world cultures are highlighted and the general masses are made aware of this human's everlasting tie. Pashtun history, culture, social traditions and literature can work as catalyst for accelerating the pace of peace process in the world.

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